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نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

THE SPIRITUAL APPROACH

(WITH ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO THE *STATESMAN*)

The communal problem not only stands in the way of our political progress, it prevents our presenting before the world the Indian achievement—the working out of human unity. For it must be admitted that there is an Indian way—the "Hindustani way"—and that it is in this way that India solved her human problems in her long history.

In the same light of India's history, again, is to be answered the question, of Indo-British relationship which should serve as the basis of the larger synthesis of the East and the West. On Britain and India rests the task of forging the cultural bond between Europe and Asia, of widening the affections of the human family. And the spirit that worked through the late Rev. C. F. Andrews is surely still at work, for the great tradition of Britain cannot but produce her great men for the accomplishment of this great cause.

Our internal problem has run deep down into the whole scheme of life of the two great ancient peoples. If only they were true to their heritage, they might not only improve their own affairs but also give a lead to the modern nations at this juncture of the world's history. The Indian techniques of humanism and the

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arts of peace have a vital use for a world now desperately fighting its way to a solution of race relations. We are thus sadly failing in our duty to ourselves as well as to the world at large. It may sound conceited, but in fact it is something for which we have to be utterly ashamed.

India's Fundamental Unity

The cultural, social and historical unity of the peoples of India was at one time normal. Seldom did people bother about these relationships. That these are questioned to-day indicates the shaking of the very foundations of Indian unity. It amounts to a negation of the very best of Hinduism and Islam in India. The questioning of our fundamental unity is far from a case of simple scepticism. We have been distracted by illusion. The feeling of a common lot, before it grows well into a conviction, is scared away by the illusion of our antagonism. Illusion is the issue of darkness, and it lies in ambush along the shadow-side of our mind. It will clear away as soon as the light is lit.

It is dangerous when false notions appear as facts of life. Arguments fail where obsessions prevail. The political and economic logic of common nationalism cand hardly be listened to as long as there is the psychological background of communal distrust. However much possessed we may be of the political technique, we build ill if we forget the human base of our national existence. And that base is to be rendered compact by means of such non-violence as will recoil even from thinking in terms of antagonism.

More than Pacts Wanted

Unfortunately, our past history, as we read it in schools, shows us in a wrong perspective. All care is bestowed on teaching that we were enemies. It is, however, not told when and how the enemies came to terms and joined hands in building the composit

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Hindustani civilization. Our education does not help to open our eyes to the common cultural heritage of Hindu-Moslem India. On the contrary, it hypnotizes us into the belief that throughout these historic centuries we only sought to destroy each other, and thus it will be idiocy to try to unite for the future in the face of such a past. The result is, in our ignorance and prejudice, we are groping in a wilderness of sordid interests for search of a pact. We are unable to visualize that the whole matter is one of heart—of love and understanding such as our ancestors of all communities achieved with ease. A long line of saints and artists, rulers and administrators, refused to perceive differences and led the country along a path of amity and brotherliness.

A pact is not synonymous with unity. Its character is separative. It brings into focus how much one party can get out of the other. Unity, on the contrary, is born of the desire to contribute to the common objective. But neither the objective is seen nor the accommodation made until there is love and trust, until there is a feeling of relationship to inspire mutual sacrifice and to remove the fear that one's sacrifice will be used exclusively for the good of the other. The way the mind works is the essential thing; the thought of safeguards comes or does not come as this work goes on.

False History

Our mind has been perverted by false history. The true history of mediæval India has to be re-written to reveal how, through centuries and living together, the Hindus and Mussalmans became imbued with the sense of a common destiny, how they began to think, alike, act alike and feel alike, in spite of occasional wranglings, even as brothers, and how their like-mindedness found expression in common creative energy and was consummated by the union of their religious and social, cultural and political life. If their enmity was real, more real was their unity. During the political crises in the life of a people it is the points of

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unity that are to be stressed, and not the points of difference. Rather let us think of the beautiful Indo-Saracenic dome of the Taj, wherein the tall steeples of Madura and the flat domes of Arabia met and mingled, than of those two original styles exclusively. Similarly, concentrate on the meeting points of our religious and cultural life, on the Kabirs and Nanaks of Indian history.

Politics and Economics Secondary

Communalism is a tangle of many knots. The work of untying them depends on efforts from various directions at the same time. But to most of us only politics and economies loom large in the composition of the whole trouble. And what is being ignored is the psychological issue, the classic issue of a mind diseased.

Yet the fact remains: mind matters most. The attitude of mind borne towards the ideals which another holds dear directs the course of their relation on the outer surface of life. Their conception of values, even the conceits they cherish, are by no means less real than the arithmetic of ratios in political and economic deals. Sentiments make up the very substance of human relations. It is these that decide the character, and colour, the texture of their intercourse in more tangible matters. Mental issues are fundamental. To what is due the demands for safeguards if not to a psychological condition! That demand will diminish as this condition improves, as our fear of each other will be in control.

Our little minds, the minds of most of us who flutter about with the demonstrational cry of "practical politics" and "concrete issues" might do well to ponder over the intangible aspect of reality, to move along the psychological lines of approach to the political problem.

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The Mental Factors Primary

Claims and counter-claims lead inevitably to a conflict if we seek to be too practical. And what but a mind initiated to believe in human kinship, a mind guided by human consideration, can recognize the point where different interests must merge in mutual good-will? What will set the limit to self-interest if there be no final appeal to human interest? Love of power invents what argument may suit it, greed of possession has a knack of persuading us to justify encroachment. Politics degenerates into an instrument of intrigue, economics into a design of dispossessing others if they are not subordinated to the moral laws of life. A mind chastened by the highest ideal of national integrity and softened by the milk of human kindness, such a mind alone can help us to get the best out of politics and economics.

None need deny the truth of the market, the vast place allotted to it in life. But the calamity begins when it seeks to absorb the whole of life—leaves not a yard for the altar, the sanctuary of the soul where man loves and lives for others, dreams and fills up the spirit, brings forth a new world of good and beauty, and behaves, even if it be for the few inspired moments, like his great Creator in miniature.

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METHODS FOR SWEETENING COMMUNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Mr. Atulanando Chakravarty has done a great service to the country by publishing at this juncture in *The Statesman* of the 13th November his article on the above subject under the caption "The Spiritual Approach".[1] He is of opinion that the problem of communal *rapprochement* should be tackled primarily from the psychological point of view and that quite undue emphasis has been laid in the past upon the political and economic aspects of the question. I am sure there well be very few who will differ from him in such a conclusion. That in spite of many points of difference between the communities which make up the population of India there has been during the past centuries an underlying bond of unity between them nobody will dare to gainsay. Just as in Europe there is a certain common bond of union between even rival nations who are in death-grip with one another which circumstance, as complained by Indian patriots, makes the British more considerate in their treatment of even the enemy nationals than of the Indian or of any other oriental subject peoples of Britain, even so in India in spite of mutual conflicts there is a certain community of outlook on life and moral values which makes the different sections of the Indian population recognise in one another a mutual kinship. It is a pity that Indian statesmen have not during recent years attempted to approach this problem of communal amity from the moral or spiritual point of view.

The Head of the Ahmadiyya Community diagnosed the disease very correctly when as long ago as 1928 he prescribed as one of its remedies the holding of Prophet Day celebrations at different centres of the Community, when people of all communities were

1. Reproduced elsewhere in this issue.—*Ed.*

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to be invited to publicly express their appreciation of the teachings and achievements of the great prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). The idea underlying the suggestion was that by the public expression of such homage to the common hero there would develop a bond of sympathy and mutual regard between the different communities. Recently the same authority has gone a step further and asked the members of the Community to hold, in addition to the Prophet Day celebrations, similar celebration in honour of the founders of all religions. Both of these celebrations have already proved very popular and successful and leaders of all communities have fully participated in them and frankly expressed their appreciation of their usefulness as an instrument for the betterment of communal relations.

It is now time that a further forward step should be taken to give this movement for communal amity a practical and more tangible shape. It is with this view that the following proposals are put forward for the consideration of our leaders and the different movements in the country which in their own ways are working for the solution of this problem. I have in view movements like the Dayal Bag Movement and Radha Swami Movement or the Prabandhak Movement, Arabindo Movement and last but not least the Ahmadiyya Movement.

My suggestion is that an "All-India League of Inter-communal amity" should be formed with membership open to all communities. Its aim should be, as Mr. Chakravarty puts it "the working out of human unity." The methods adopted for the attainment of this purpose may be among others the following:—

(1) Propaganda: A League such as the one contemplated should not find it difficult to win the sympathy and active co-operation of both the government and the public. Public utility services such as the Railways, the Tramways, the Postal and Telegraph Departments may be easily persuaded to help the League by granting it the free use of their advertising

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mediums. Similarly large trading companies of national importance such as match factories, cotton mills, etc., might be induced to further the object of the League by printing slogans or other signs and symbols on their products such as are calculated to impress upon the public the desirability of cultivating good understanding and love between the different communities. Municipalities in big cities might be induced to lend the free use of their notice boards or kiosks and other advertising mediums.

(2) Celebrations: One or more days in the year may be set apart for celebrations calculated to promote intercommunal amity. The League may try to induce the central and provincial governments to cooperate in the work. Among other activities meetings and lectures may be held on such occasions in honour of the founder of different religions. Representative members belonging to different communities may be invited to speak at such meetings in appreciation of the lives and teachings of the founders of not only of their own religion but also of those of sister religions. The points of unity between different systems may be emphasised. In this way an atmosphere of mutual regard and appreciation between the communities may be created which cannot fail to improve their mutual relations. In course of such celebrations procession may be held in which slogans and songs may be recited such as are calculated to develop a sense of common Indian nationality.

(3) Literature: The League may arrange for the production and publication of literature containing among other things stories from real history of great examples of toleration and good-will by members of one community towards another. Such examples were not rare in the past annals of the country. Even the much traduced personalities of Indian history like Aurangzeb, Shivaji, Hyder Ali or Ranjit Singh are known to have shown examples of large heartedness, toleration and liberality towards members of rival communities which can well serve as an eye-opener in these days of communal bickerings.

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(4) Rewriting of History text-books taught in schools: Mr. Chakravarty has rightly observed: "Unfortunately one part of history as we read it in schools shows us in a wrong prospective." It has been the uniform policy of some foreign writers from whom most of our Indian historians draw their inspiration to unduly stress points of our difference and pass over incidents exemplifying mutual tolerance and goodwill between the communities. The object is obvious. It is true that a determined effort should be made by our writers and government authorities to break the spell. It is no use arguing that facts are facts. Actually many of the so-called facts of history are merely fictions. And even if there are some ugly facts, it is not necessary that our boys and girls in their adolescent years should be acquainted with all the naked facts of life. For the purpose of healthy growth it is necessary that the facts presented to the young minds should be carefully selected and arranged with a definite purpose in view. In America it is the rule that no book containing any unfavourable reference to the heroes of the War of Independence, whatever its historical merit, can be prescribed for any school teaching young boys and girls. It should be the business of the proposed League to bring to the notice of the authorities concerned the tendency of any of the books prescribed as text-books from the point of view of communal relations, in order that offending books might be deleted and removed from the authorised list.

(5) Socialised activities in Schools and Colleges: In addition to theoretical teaching, students in Schools and Colleges may be afforded opportunities for the practical preparation of the new Indian nationality. For this purpose on the occasion of festivals observed in Schools and Colleges students of one community may be encouraged to play the host and invite their friends of a different community to be their guests. On such occasions it will be the point of honour on the part of the hosts to cultivate by all reasonable means the goodwill and convenience of

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their guests. In examples when the Muslims are the hosts and the Hindus the guests, the Muslims in the preparation of their dishes and in the service and attendance must be careful to conform as far as possible to the customs of their guests. And similarly the subjects of that evening talks and lectures should be such as would hold up to general appreciation and admiration the good points of Hindu history, religion and culture. The same will be done by the Hindus in relation to Muslims on another day when they are the hosts and Muslims the guests.

(6) Justice between the communities: One work which may be undertaken by such a League is to arrange for the due administration of justice in the case of a conflict between rival communities. The League members may be sworn to observe the rules of justice and fair-play between the communities in all cases of communal fracas, and not to be swayed by a sense of partisanship. Such partisan spirit on the part of leaders and newspapers has been the bane of all communal relations. Whenever a communal riot breaks out, at once the Hindu-managed papers and public men take up the cause of the Hindus and the Muslim-managed papers and public men take up the cause of the Muslims, and the voice of justice is lost in the wilderness. The only result is that hatred and animosity is intensified and even if the party in the wrong is punished, they nurse in their hearts a rankling sense of bitterness and injustice. It should be possible for the League to arrange for really impartial enquiries and reports in every case of communal riot. And if, to begin with, such enquiries and reports do not receive due consideration by the public or the authorities, they cannot fail, at no distant date, to win such consideration if they continue to be really just and impartial.

(7) National Pilgrimages: One work which may be undertaken by the proposed League and which will be an open and effective symbol of its mission is to

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arrange for occasional "National pilgrimages." It is well known how pilgrimages to places held sacred by people, serve to create a sense of solidarity and *espirit de-corpse*. Such pilgrimages have therefore been enjoined by all religions. In India Hindus have their sacred places—they visit Ajudya, Brindaban, Mathura, sacred to the memory of Sri Ram Chandra, and Sri Krishana. The Buddhists have their sacred places—Gaya, Rajgiri, Sarnath—associated with the memories of Gautam Buddha. The Muslims have Ajmere, Delhi, Panipat, Sylhet, Qadian—sacred to the memories of Saints Moiundin Chishti, Nizam-ud-Din, Bu Ali Qalander, Shah Jalal and Prophet Ahmad, peace be on them all. Now if the League should organise pilgrimages to these places by mixed bands of people—Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims—it would serve as an effective symbol of the new spirit of mutual recognition and tolerance. Speaking from the Islamic point of view there is certainly no more objection to visiting places associated with the memories of Sri Ram Chandra, Sri Krishna and Gautam Buddha and the scenes of their ministry and mission than in visiting places associated with the memories of Muslim saints and apostles. Such great men are in fact recognised by Islam as the common heritage of the race. I am sure the same will be the view of all rationally-minded Hindus and Buddhists. Such a movement would, I feel sure, send an immediate thrill throughout the length and breadth of India and rally public opinion round the League.

One thing however is important and must not be forgotten if the proposed scheme is to have any chance of success. And that is that the motive behind the movement must be primarily spiritual. Any motive of gaining political or economic advantage or popular applause or official favour, is sure to frustrate the purpose of the movement and land it in failure. Pacts have been tried before this and blank cheques have been offered. But the result has been a dismal failure. They have served only to aggravate the malady

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in stead of curing it. Our only chance of success lies in our recognition and acceptance of a higher and purer motive—the motive of "the working out of human unity"—which Mr. Chakravarty believes India is destined to achieve. As regards the methods I think I can best describe it in the words of the Holy Quran: "We (Muslims) believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you and our God and your God is One and to Him do we submit."

The recognition of a common object of love and worship can alone provide adequate motivation for this great work of unification.

ABUL HASHIM KHAN CHAUDHARY.

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BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN INFLUENCE UPON VEDIC RELIGION AND CULTURE—II

(Translated from Urdu)

"This is an account of the fate of the towns which We relate to you : of them are some which stand and others have been moved down.

And We did not do them injustice, but they were unjust to themselves, so their gods whom they called upon beside Allah did not avail them aught when the decree of your Lord came to pass ; and they added but to their ruin.

And such is the punishment of your Lord when He punishes the towns while they are unjust ; surely His punishment is painful, severe.

Most surely there is a sign in this for him who fears the chastisement of the Hereafter ; this is a day on which the people shall be gathered together, and this is a day that shall be witnessed.

And We do not delay it but to an appointed end.

On the day when it shall come, no one shall speak except with His permission, then some of them shall be unhappy and others happy.

—*The Holy Quran, XI : 100-105.*

In the previous issue of *The Review of Religions* we gave a brief outline of the Chaldean Empire which rose on the ruins of the great dominion of the Assyrians. The Chaldeans came to the fore in the ancient world in comparatively a short time and soon held Iraq and Palestine in a firm grip; but their power was also very short lived. The Chaldean Empire was founded in 625 B.C., and was stamped out by Persia in 538 B.C. Out of the figures that filled this brief span Nebuchadnezzar is, in some respects, the most important. He had conspicuous success against the Jews of Palestine whose sturdy spirit of independ-

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ence had far so long defind the military might of the Babylonian and Assyrian Empires. He sacked Jerusalem and carried off thousands of captives which entirely upset the economic structure and the political organisation of the Jewish world, so that a couple of centuries or so afterwards when Palestine fell a prey to the Romans the Israelites had lost their last chance of recovery.

Babylon was the Capital of the Chaldean Empire and under Nebuchadnezzar it rose to unprecedented heights as an Imperial city of great temples and beautiful gardens. Having been situated on a level plain, building stone was not available for the imposing structures and the material used by the engineers were clay bricks baked into hard enduring firmness.

About 500 B.C. Herodotus visited Babylon and he has left us very nearly a satisfying picture of its grandeur which by later historians has been accepted as generally trustworthy in regard to the main features of the city and its life. We learn from his writings that the imperial capital was also an impregnable fortress. It lay spread in a vast square of which the area rather exceeded 185 square miles, with a strong defensive wall all round which was further strengthened by a deep moat with draw-bridges at strategic points which could be raised at a moment's notice. The wall was so thick as to allow two chariots to gallop abreast. But the area enclosed by these outer defences was not all occupied by buildings for there were extensive well cultivated fields in the enclosure to save the population from hunger in times of siege.

Planet Worship

Quite apart from his military exploits and the beautiful bridges and hanging gardens with which he adorned his capital, our great interest in Nebuchadnezzar centres for the purpose of this article in a great seven-storied temple designed and built by him to serve as the centre

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of the religious life of his empire. This temple was square in form, with its seven stories named after the seven days of the week. Each storey was painted a different colour in accordance with the colour assigned to the god of the planet connected with the day of the week associated with that storey. The first storey, thus, which was associated with *Shanni* (Saturday) and dedicated to Saturn, was painted black; the second storey associated with *Shukra* (Friday) and dedicated to Venus was lotus-white; the third storey associated with Thursday and dedicated to *Briehaspati* (Jupiter), was violet. The fourth was a dark bluish green associated with Mercury; the fifth a deep orange dedicated to Mars; the sixth silver white; and the seventh, which was associated with *Mangal* (Tuesday) was a rich gold. In the last storey was built a complete model of the whole temple, alongside of which was placed a model of an old-fashioned temple as well. Connected with this uppermost storey were spacious living quarters for the priestess who was incharge of the temple. In an upper storey of the temple were also golden sofas and a large golden table, all richly set with precious stones. Each storey was directly accessible to the devotees and for those desiring to worship at any particular shrine it was not necessary to pass through other parts of the temple to reach the altar where they wanted to pray. The model placed in the last story was intended to enable the devotees to worship at all the shrines without having to go from storey to storey; and for the conservative-minded there was the model of the old-fashioned temple placed side by side.

Now let us turn to Hinduism. It is too well known to need any further emphasis that in all forms of Hinduism, whether ancient or modern, the worship and adoration of planets has always figured as one of the most important features. In Hindu ritualism the Sanskrit word for the worship of stars is *Nav-grah-puja* (worship of the nine planets). This *Nav-grah-puja* is an intrinsic part of the ceremonies connected with Hindu marriages, deaths and births, and all other important social occasions when the sanctifying

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influence of a religious ceremony is thought desirable. In *Yajnopavita* (ceremony of obtaining the sacred thread) too the worship of stars forms a main feature. In fact there is no domestic ceremony based on Hindu ritualism that does not centre round the adoration of heavenly bodies.

Seven of the planets worshipped in Hinduism are the same as those worshipped by the Chaldeans, and the two additional ones are *Rahu* and *Ketu*. Stories found in Hindu literature in regard to the origin of these two are very interesting. There is a great deal of difference on a number of details, but the main outline common to most of them is that long, long ago there was a great demon who was destroyed by Shiva, of whom another name in the Brahman Granths is *Praja Pati*. It is said that this demon at one time went across the sky in the form of a deer when Shiva assumed the form of a hunter and went in pursuit. The god let fly an arrow which caught the demon squarely in the neck and severed his head from the body. In fact so violent was the impact of the blow that the head and the body flew far apart, settling finally in the firmament as two different planets. The head became the *Rahu* and the rest of the body became *Ketu*. Both these stars are taken to be of very bad omen. Some modern Hindu scholars understand *Ketu* to be included in the category of stars which seem to have a tail, and they believe *Rahu* too to be a heavenly body of the kind which appear only occasionally. It is not without interest to note here that for shooting stars the Sanskrit word is *Ketu*.

In these days the division and classification of different subjects as taught in the schools and universities keeps the various Sciences and Arts faculties quite separate and distinct from studies connected with Religion and Culture, while medical studies are treated as in a class more or less quite apart from other subjects. But in ancient days this was not so. Prior to the birth of Christianity there was no religion, apart from the Mosaic system, in which Astronomy

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did not play a leading role. And side by side with Astronomy was kept the study and practice of Medicine. This applies to Arabia as well before the advent of Islam—in point of fact to Islam as well in so far at least that the Holy Prophet Mohammad laid the greatest possible emphasis on the science of ailment of the human body and their cure; and in actual practice, too, knowledge of medicine in the Muslim world has gone hand in hand with the deeper study and practice of Religion.

Omens

Thus it happens that it is well nigh impossible to get a proper perspective of either Babylonian and Assyrian cults or of Vedic Hinduism without reference to Astronomy (and also Astrology) as understood in those early days of human history. In fact Vedic Hinduism plainly confesses that to it Astronomy is like an eye (*Nayan*) without which it is impossible to see the true meaning of the Vedas. And what is true in this respect of Vedic Hinduism is to an equal extent true in regard to the cults in vogue under the Babylonian and Assyrian regimes. Magic and Totemism too were prominent in the religious life of Babylon and Assyria, and we find both of equal importance in Vedic Hinduism. We know moreover that life in the Babylonian and Assyrian worlds was to a very large extent governed by what the people considered to be good or bad omens. Among these omens some of the most important were the hooting of an owl; a jackal crossing your path; a lizard falling on your right or left side; the voice of a number of birds when heard first on getting up in the morning, *i.e.*, which bird was heard, and in which direction was it facing when heard: and it is needless to say that all these omens are no less important in Vedic Hinduism. Omens are also drawn both in Babylon and in Vedic Hinduism from dreams. A Cuckoo seen in a dream, a *nil kanth*, a vulture, a monkey, different kinds of flowers and scores of other objects had different meanings assigned to them. Further, we

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know that the Babylonians and Assyrians studied the callendar with painstaking care in order to find an *auspicious* day for a journey or an important venture of any other kind. Vedic Hinduism too is equally keen on these points.

Along with being the originators of the worship of stars, the Babylonians and Assyrians were also the founders of the science of Astrology (*Samudrik Shastra*) which was later further developed by the Aryans in India. "Facial expression" as understood by the ancients in connection with character study or the study of one's *future*, covered a much wider area than that conceded by modern science. Accordingly we find that Vedic Hinduism has taken more pains to understand the significance of "moles" on various parts of the human body, of teeth set close tegether or otherwise, of the dimples which appeared when laughing or talking, of a thick or thin or slow or a musical voice, of a fair or dark complexion and of the wanings of the moon than to understand the nature or attributes of Divinity. And in all these things the roots of the conclusions drawn go back to Astronomy.

For this reason the temptation is very great to include in this study brief introductory notes on the influence of the various planets considered important in the Babylonian world and in Vedic Hinduism. But the difficulty is that this would demand far more space than can be managed here. Moreover, too, such a study perhaps would rather try the patience of the layman reader.

The *Janmakundli* or *Janma-patri* (horoscope) among the Hindus is prepared on the basis of the position of the various planets at the time of the birth of the person concerned. Factors taken into consideration in the preparation of a haroscope are: the position of the planets in their orbits, *i.e.*, their distance in *devishtha* (aphelion), or *nedishtha* (perihelion), or *madhya-vartti* (intermediate position in regard to the sun) and so on; *Parthiv-grah* or the position, particularly in relation to the earth, of those planets which resemble the earth more in their properties, such as

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Mars, Venus, Mercury, etc.; *Shwashrit-grah*, or the position of self-sustained planets; *Surya-ashrit-grah*, or the position of the planets sustained by the sun; and particularly the position of those floating planets, of systems other than the solar, which sometimes intervene between the sun to create dots on it as in the case of an eclipse. Not visible to the naked eye, these dots are called *Sankraman* or *Sankranti*. But these are details which every layman would not read with interest.

Seclusion of Women

With these points of close resemblance between the Babylonian and Vedic cultures there are one or two differences as well which are no less significant, for they indicate that Babylonian and Assyrian influence did not cease to mould the social conceptions of Vedic Culture after the Aryan waves of migration had poured through Central Asia and settled permanently in India. Evidence on the point is clear and conclusive that in Assyria women lived their social life apart in a circle of their own. Some system very closely akin to the "Purdah" system of these days seems to have been in force among them. It would appear that it was considered an unbearable disgrace for a woman to be seen going about in public, for in all the remains of Assyrian life brought to light by Archaeology not a single image or statue or a picture of the female figure has so far been discovered anywhere. We know nothing in regard to her features, her dress or her ornaments; in fact we have no data at all with which to build even a mental picture of her beauty and charms, or her lack thereof.

But among the Aryans, at any rate in the earlier stages of Aryan culture, the seclusion of women does not seem to have been so complete. Later on however the social life of the sexes developed along lines very much the same as in the case of the Assyrians, for among the Rajputs and the other higher or monied classes it came to be looked upon as a great disgrace for

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a woman of quality and position to be seen in public. Expressions in Sanskrit literature such *Asuryampashya Rajdara* (ladies of whose beauty even the sun may not catch a glimpse) are common, and they denote clearly the prevalence of a "Purdah" system among the Aryans. In *Bhatti Kavya*, which work contains the rules of Panini's Sanskrit grammar put into verse, there is clear evidence of the fact that in the higher classes women did not go about without observing some sort of "Purdah." This book contains the story of *Ramayan* in a chapter of which Ravan, having carried off Sita and having assigned to her a garden named *Asok-vanika* (a small jungle of asok trees) praised her new abode by saying that here even the sun would not see her or the air have a chance to touch her. In all likelihood such expressions had a large element of poetic exaggeration for dramatic effect, but it cannot be denied that they sprang from a considerable degree of the real seclusion of women at the back.

In the Chaldean Empire the female sex seems to have moved about without any great restrictions. The Chaldeans, unlike the Assyrians, were traders first and warriors afterwards; and their women helped them a great deal in buying and selling and looking after the shop. In social gatherings too Chaldean women mingled freely with the opposite sex as is the case now in Europe and America, and with those who have followed the "Western" way in these matters. With the Chaldeans annual fairs, held in the towns, were very popular and the celebrations were participated in by women. In fact the participation of young men and maidens was considered to be a main feature of the festivities which were rather of the nature of "Carnivals" in Latin Europe. The Chaldean social system also seems to have approved of a form of the courtship system of marriage; while, at the same time girls could be bought and sold as well, in which transaction the price depended upon the beauty and charm of the maiden. Scholars interested in the study of the growth of social forms are inclined to hold that such

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sales of maidens developed into the *Yautuk* system which later still assumed the form of alimony, dowry *jahez* and *mahr*, etc.

It may be noted that famous Sanskrit words expressing the same sense as "Purdah" are *javanika* (curtain) and *avagunthan* (veil). The word *nishant*, which is the Sanskrit equivalent of *harem*, literally means: *nisha* "night" and *ant* "end"; and they point to the seclusion of high-born ladies in Hindu society. In *shishupal-badh* of Magh Kavi we read the breeze being upbraided for its audacity in having blown off the cloak of ladies living in the seclusion of the *harem* (*Nishat*). Evidence of the Purdah system is also very clear in the time of Harsh Vardhan (6th century A.D.) as is clearly indicated in *Kadambari* by Ban-Bhatt, poet laureate of the King of Kanauj (see *Mahashweta-wittant* in *Kadambri*).

ANU, BAAL, AND *NUH*

But with this important difference in the two social systems, the religion of the Assyrians and Chaldeans was practically the same. Only the chief god of the Assyrians was Au-Sur, while the main god in the Babylonian religion having been Baal-Marduk, the same continued to be the chief deity in the Chaldean religion. Baal-Marduk is a compound name which means the god that combines, in his one person, all the deities from Baal to Marduk.

It is noteworthy that two kinds of gods were worshipped in Babylon: (*a*) those of whom the Babylonian conception allowed images or idols to be made; and (*b*) those of whom no tangible representations were made to be used at times of worship. Among the latter the God who stood at the top of the list was *Ilu* for whose worship no temple of any kind was considered at all necessary, nor did his worship take any specific set form. The Babylonian conception of Ilu was that of an Invisible Power obedience to whom was a virtue to be cultivated. The gods next in rank were three (*a*) *Anu*; (*b*) *Bel* or *Beel* or *Baal*; and (*c*) *Nuh*.

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Anu was the god of darkness and he is described as having a head like that of a fish, the shoulders and abdomen of a human being, and the legs and claws and tail of an eagle. Bel, Beel and Baal, in spite of the slight difference, may safely be taken to be different forms of the same name of which the bearer was considered to be the lord and master of every living thing that breathed, and was credited with numerous good qualities. He was pictured in the form of a king of handsome and majestic presence, sitting in state on a throne. Nuh was the lord of all inanimate objects of which the presence could be felt by means of the various sense organs in man. He was understood to be a kind of *vetal*—taking the expression in its widest application as embracing all fearful and uncouth objects of the kind we see in nightmares. *Vetal*, in short, may be taken as a *jinn*, to use a Quranic expression ; but it has to be remembered that Nuh was worshipped as a god, not propitiated as a demon or evil spirit. Whatever unpleasantness there was about Nuh was believed by the Babylonians to be of the kind to be found in a bitter medicine or the surgeon's knife.

These three gods were supposed to have their consorts, and next to these in importance were the gods associated with the sun, and the moon and other heavenly bodies. It may well be imagined that Babylonian and Chaldean deities of this rank must have been very numerous – almost numberless, as is the case in Hinduism. The Chaldeans named the days of the week after seven of their most important deities of this category.

The importance of Astronomy to a religion such as this is not difficult to understand. Accordingly we find that in addition to the worship of heavenly bodies in their temples, for studying the stars the Chaldeans had institutions very much like the observatories we have now. Naturally therefore the science of Astronomy made great strides under the Chaldeans who in their calculations are credited with having originated the sexa-decimal system, which has survived to our own days and of which an instance known to

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everyone is the division of an hour into 60 minutes and of a minute into 60 seconds. The Chaldeans were also the originators of a kind of calendar usually called menology or menologium which contains brief biographical notes on some famous saints.

Like the three main deities of Babylonia and Chaldean we find a *trideva* (a trinity of gods) in Vedic Hinduism as well. These three gods, according to the Puranas, are *Brahma* (Creator), *Vishnu* (Sustainer), and *Mahesh* or *Rudra* (Destroyer). *Shiva* is an other name often used for Mahesh. In the Puranas we come across the consorts of these three gods as well. This similarity between the Babylonian and Chaldean religions on one side and Vedic Hinduism on the other in point of a common belief in Trinitarianism is very striking and clear.

It is also interesting to note that Yask Achariya in his *Nirukt* has devoted a chapter to Hindu gods, the name of the chapter being *Daivat-kand* (chapter containing an account of the gods). He starts with the fundamental belief that there is one principal Deity of whom there are three major manifestations, these three lesser gods or parts of the main Deity, so to say, having each a circle of authority of his own. In one circle he puts the earth and its nether regions inside the outer crust, *Agni* being the god of this world which is called *Prithvisathan*. The second world comprises the atmospheric belt next to the earth over which *Vayu* or *Indra* holds sway ; and *Suriya* (sun) is the god of *Dyusthan*, or the regions which lie next to this belt. This idea of Yask Achariya is practically identical with the Chaldean belief in regard to Ilu and the three deities next to him in rank.

Coming lower down in the scale of the status of gods we come across thousands of other gods in Babylonian and Chaldean mythology which in fact are the presiding spirits of mountains and rivers and trees and various towns and localities, etc. ; and we have vast and bewildering accounts of the revelries, loves and hates and wars of these numberless gods. In this respect,

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too, Vedic Hinduism very closely resembles the Babylonian and Chaldean religions for here too we have a similarly endless array of gods and similar stories of their lives.

In the *Daivat-kand* of *Nirukt* we have brief notes on some of the Hindu gods, and in the Puranas we have long accounts of many, many more. Space can not be found in this article for an account, however brief, of them all ; but by way of a sample we give below the particulars to be found in Vedic literature about Indra.

Indra is also the god of war (*yud*). He is armed with his *Vajra*, a weapon which some accounts identify with the thunderbolt. The rainbow is the bow of Indra. The riding elephant of this god is *Airavat* and his war-horse is called *Uchchais-Sharava*, both having come into existence following the churning of the seas, and both of these events involving long and complicated stories in themselves. Indra's charrioteer is called *Matali*. The capital of the empire of Indra is *Amrawati*, and his great palace is called *Vaijayant*. To the north of Mt. (Su)Meru, Indra has a garden called *Nandan* of which a notable feature are its *parijat* and *harsingar* trees. These are the trees which *Krishna* pulled out by the roots, and brought them over to adorn the garden of *Satya-bhama*, one of his beloved wives. Indra's wife is *Shachi* who is also called Paulomi, the meaning of the latter being " daughter of the Asur named Paulom." Indra's son is *Jayant* and *Jayanti* is his daughter. Indra has one thousand eyes, in regard to which there are many different sets of stories. *Tillottma* is the nymph Indra loved best of all. The *Gandharva* (musicians angels) were his courtiers and court attendants. The nymphs are the wives of these courtiers and there are, besides, more than three million virgin nymphs out of which number Indra bestows them on those who died a noble death on the field. In bringing about the destruction of *Varitra*, son of *Tvashta*, Indra experienced a series of difficulties to which reference is made in the *Mahabharat* in 12 : 342 and 1 : 211, etc. And in addition to these

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things there are long accounts of Indra's *Som-pran* (drinking of *Som*) ; the destruction at his hands, by means of his *Vajra*, of innumerable demons ; his habits ; the kinds of foods and drink he liked ; and descriptions of the great beauty of his palaces and gardens.

Among the Babylonian gods, the deity called *Nuh* deserves special attention in this connection. In the Old Testament we have a long account of Noah who is mentioned as a Prophet of God. His father's name is given as Lamech and the word "Noah" means "rest" or "comfort." Lamech means powerful.[1] The similarity of name in Noah and *Nuh* is too striking to be missed even by a layman. In 2 Peter (2 : 5) we read of Noah as "a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and a fuller account of these floods is contained in Genesis chapters vi and vii. Therein we read of a great unprecedented deluge when Noah and his followers saved themselves by riding in an ark which Noah had built, having been informed by God as to the imminence of the deluge. After floating for many days on the crest of the rising water, this boat at last touched dry land on the top of Mt. Ararat.

Similarly in the Holy Quran too we come across Nuh who is a Prophet of God. Of all the accounts contained in the Holy Quran the details given in *Surah Hud* are the most arresting in connection with the subject under discussion. These details are to the effect that having been warned by God and directed to adopt that plan to save himself and his followers from the impending deluge, Nuh built an ark in which, along with those who believed in him, he embarked on the waters when the storm came. When the flood abated the boat came to rest on Mt. Judi.

This Judi, as we know, forms part of a chain of hills which lie in the region where the borders of Iraq, Turkey and Palestine meet each other. Among these

1. Speech of Judge Rutherford at the Albert Hall, in *Face the Facts*, International Bible and Tract Society.

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hills, Judi is the name of one of the lower peaks of the Ararat Mountains.

Now comparative Philology would suggest that *Judi*, *Gudi*, *Kudi* and *Budi* are one and the same word after it had gone through certain processes of variation of pronunciation from place to place and from language to language. Mr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali in a footnote in his translation into English of the Holy Quran expresses the opinion that Kurdistan seems to be connected with Judi, Kudi and Judi, being the same word only pronounced in slightly a different way. Should this view, which Mr. Yusuf Ali bases upon evidence drawn from standard books of reference, be accepted as correct, than the *r* in Kurdistan would have to be taken as having crept in later, and this supposition is not inadmissible in view of the principles of Philology.

Now let us return to Vedic Hinduism. Very nearly the same story is to be found in *Shathpath Brahman*, in the first chapter. In this account construction of the ark, embarkation in it, and the unprecedented violence of the deluge are the same as in the case of the Biblical and the Quranic accounts. But with this similarity in a number of the main essentials, there are some differences too. For instance, in the *Shathpath Brahman* the name given instead of Nuh is *Manu*. Moreover the Shathpath story begins with Manu going to a tank to draw some water, and fetching up, accidentally, a tiny little fish. This fish besought Manu's protection against the bigger fishes that threatened to swallow it up. Manu took pity on it and put it in a small pit full of water to grow there by herself. When it grew to be too large to be contained in that receptacle any more Manu transferred it to a deeper and wider pond, and so on, until he had eventually to put it into the sea. In order to repay this kindness the fish then warned Manu of the imminence of the deluge and advised him to have a boat ready to meet this danger. When the storm came Manu was to embark in the boat and tie it to the great fin on the back of the fish

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which promised to come to his rescue at the opportune moment and to pull his boat across the troubled waters of the flood to safety.

The place where Manu's boat touched dry land is called *Manoh Avasarpan* (*i.e.*, the place where Manu disembarked, and Hindu Pandits take it to be situated somewhere in the Himalayan range. But they miss the point that the Himalayan chain, through the Hindu-kush mountains, merges into the chain of hills which stretches right across to the seaboard of the Levant.

Taking all the circumstances of the case, the deluge, whether caused by unusual discharges from springs or by some watercourse becoming dammed up through a landslide, or the overflowing of some big inland sea, the topographical features round about the region of the Ararat Mountains would seem to be indicated as a more likely sight for the devastating flood than the flat plains of India. The country there is a welter of hills and valleys with snow covered peaks not too far and the Caspean Sea, the Black Sea and Lake Ural are situated on the fringe of this region.

However, the sight of the deluge does not concern us here, for our interest lies in Hazrat Nuh, a Prophet of God according to the Holy Quran, whose memory in Babylonian tradition had been distorted through the passage of time into a pagan god. It appears that prior to the clear light shed by the Holy Quran on the distinction between a Prophet and the Deity, earlier peoples, in times remote from the period of a Prophet, were liable to confuse him with the Divine Being Himself; and the last manifestation of this dangerous tendency, before it was stamped out by Islam, is furnished by Christianity. From passages in the Quran of which one has been quoted at the commencement of this article we learn that this fatal error, which in time vitiates the whole philosophy of life, was responsible for the tribulations through which past civilisations have had to pass. Allah says:

> " Oh you people who believe ! do not follow the footsteps of the devil ; and whoever follows the footsteps

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of the devil, then surely he bids the doing of indecency and evil ; and were it not for Allah's grace upon you and His Mercy, not one of you would have been pure, but Allah purifies him whom he pleases; and Allah is the Hearing and the Knowing." (xxiv : 21.)

This is an injunction which we should all do well to bear in mind for indeed in front of our own eyes a civilisation is again on the anvil that had failed to appreciate the difference between a Prophet of God and God Himself.

PANDIT RUDRA DEVA, SHASTRI.

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CAPTIVES OF WAR AND ISLAM

International law now supposed to be in force relating to the prisoners of war embraces the following points:—

1. The freedom of the captives of war should have this limitation only that they were not free to rejoin their country's forces. Apart from that they should not be subjected to any sort of persecution. They should not be man-handled or exposed to hardship in the matter of food, etc.

2. The prisoners of war must abide by the military descipline of their captors; in case of any breach they were to be tried by a martial court.

3. The captors cannot take possession of any portion of the captive's goods other than arms. If in special circumstances it was found necessary to deprive a captive of his personal effects, these were to be returned to him when the captive was set free.

4. The captives of war are, as a rule, kept in a walled city, a fortress or a military camp, within which area they are expected to be left free to move about and recreate themselves in whatever way they liked, but they must attend the roll-call at a fixed time.

5. If a captive happens to be an officer or a man of high rank, he should be given preferential treatment. A prisoner of war can be kept in prison if he is guilty of any breach of military rules, or if there is any likelihood of his running away; but in any case he is to be kept separate from those under sentence for moral crimes.

6. Captives may be provided with better food and lodging when an agreement exists between the belligerents; but in case there is no such agreement, they should be given the same kind of food that is ordinarily provided to men of their rank in their respective armies.

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7. Governments are expected not to oblige captives to fight against their country, or to force them to betray the secrets of their country. They can, however, be employed on less arduous jobs not relating to the war.

8. It is no crime if a captive runs away; but every effort is permissible for re-capturing him. If a captive is fortunate enough to make good his escape and rejoins his army, but again falls into the hands of enemy, he is not to be ill-treated on the ground that he had once escaped. He may however be kept under a stricter watch.

9. No prisoner of war is responsible for his fellow prisoners. If one man escapes, his companions are not to be called to account on that score.

10. If captives pledge themselves solemnly not to take any further part in the war, they can be set at liberty even while hostilities are still in progress. They can also be repatriated in which event they may even fight against countries with which their former captors have no treaty obligations.

11. Through an exchange of the captives of war, all disabilities are automatically removed. They become freemen in every respect. While arranging an exchange of the prisoners of war their rank and status is taken into consideration. An officer is exchanged for an officer, a soldier for a soldier, a sickman for a sickman. More than one man from the ranks may be exchanged for an officer.

12. The term of captivity expires with the cessation of hostilities, and captives are set at liberty against indemnity or other payments agreed upon in the peace terms.

These laws are the result of labours spread over a period of something like forty years of a host of American and European statesmen; and they represent in fact the height of Western achievement in this regard. Finally put into shape by the International Law Association at the Hague in a conference in 1921, they

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represent the *plus ultra* beyond which the Western mind has not been able to see.

Let us now weigh this proud achievement of the 20th century against the reforms effected by Islam 13 centuries ago when the world as compared with to-day was a world of barbarians—reforms which Islam brought about with regard to the conduct of war in the *darkest* of ages and in the *darkest* of land.

Prior to the advent of Islam, in some civilised countries the custom of emancipating captives in exchange for a certain sum of money was in vogue. But the Arabs, on account of their passion for revenge, generally preferred to have blood for blood. This revengeful nature of the Arab is beautifully illustrated in two couplets of an Arab poetess who learnt that her brother 'Amar had consented to take blood-money for his murdered brother. She instigated her son to avenge his uncle's murder in the most stinging words:

> "Don't talk of 'Amr, for he is ready to make peace; his belly, to all appearance, is not very big, but it canuot be easily filled: he does not even scruple to accept money for his brother's murder.
>
> "But if you too, my son, do not want to avenge this murder and would rather have money than blood, then get out of my sight and never let me see you again. Go and wander in shame and humiliation."

When the Chief of Kandah was captured in the battle of 'Kallab', Qais bin Asam smashed out his teeth with his bow and then murdered him in cold blood, thus avenging the murder of his tribal chief—Nu'man bi'n Habas.[1]

Amir bin Ma'lik persecuted Said bin Zarara to such an extent that the latter died in prison.[2]

If the Arabs at all showed humaneness towards captives,—though it was very rare—it usually assumed this form that before liberating a captive they branded

1. *Balughul Wab*, pages 61—83.
2. *Ibid.*

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him with a mark of disgrace. Aun bin Abbas liberated Muavia bin Jaun after cutting his forelock.[1]

Captive women received even more shameful treatment at the hands of the Arabs. They were most inhumanly outraged and subjected to the grossest atrocities.

With the advent of Islam, the battle which brought the problem of captives to the fore was the battle of Badr. Seventy captives were presented before the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him). He turned towards Hazrat Abu Bakr for counsel. Abu Bakr advised that they should be set at liberty in exchange for ransom. Hazrat Omar however differed and opined that the lives of the enemies of Islam should not be spared. But the Holy Prophet (my peace and blessings of God be upon him) accepted Hazrat Abu Bakr's advice and liberated all the captives against ransom.

Although the custom of receiving blood-money was already in vogue, and Islam was not the pioneer in this respect, yet Islam ennobled and elevated it. This custom had degenerated into a convenience for amassing money. But Islam practised it only as a convenience in the interests of the captives. Monetary gain was never aimed at. A most conspicuous example to this effect to be found in the Holy Prophet refusing to accept *fidyah* in return for the body of an enemy chief killed in battle.[2] If he had any monetary motive in view, the handsome offer would have been welcome to him, but he ordered the body to be handed over to the enemy without charge.

Islam's magnanimity to the captives of war did not end here; the Holy Prophet of Islam often liberated captives without any ransom whatsoever. He accepted ransom for some of the prisoners of the Banu Mustaliq, but liberated a large number of them without any compensation. "Among them were those who were

1. *Balughul Wab.* pages 61-83.
2. *Tabqat Ibn Saad*, Vol. II, page 64.

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liberated in exchange for a ransom and there were those who were set free without any ransom at all, and there was not one female prisoner but returned to her people."[1]

In the battle of *Daumat-al-Jundal* nearly one hundred men and women of the enemy camp were captured. When Abu Zaid, after having accepted Islam came to the Holy Prophet and interceded with him on behalf of the captives, they were all set free.[2]

In the battle of *Bani Tameem* eleven women and thirty children were captured by the Musalmans. But when they began to weep on the arrival of their chieftains, the Holy Prophet set all of them at liberty.[3]

Once a gang of eighty Meccans conspired to attack the Holy Prophet just when he would be saying his morning prayers. The companions of the Prophet came to know of this conspiracy in time and succeeded in capturing them. The Holy Prophet liberated all of them without any compensation.[4]

The Companions of the Holy Prophet captured Shamama bin Asal, a very rich chief of Yamama, and tied him to a pillar in the mosque. Seeing him in this condition, the Holy Prophet questioned him in regard to his financial position. He replied, "If you want to kill me, there is blood in my veins. If you want to oblige me, I have got a tongue full of gratitude. If you want riches from me, you can have as much of it as you like." Next day the Holy Prophet asked him the same question to which he repeated the same reply. Even the third day the Holy Prophet received the same reply from him. At this the Holy Prophet ordered his release without any ransom. Emerging from the mosque Shamama went to a spring of water under a date-palm and took a bath. Returning to the mosque he proclaimed the *Kalima* and became a convert to Islam. Addressing the Holy

1. *Tabqat Ibn Saad*, Vol. II, page 117.
2. *Tabqat Ibn Saad*, Vol. II.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Maqrazi*, Vol. II, page 78.

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Prophet, he said, "O, Prophet of God! No face on this earth was more repellent for me than yours, but to-day you are to me the most charming man on the face of the earth. No religion seemed more detestable to me than Islam, but to-day I love it with my heart. No city looked more abominable to me than yours, but to-day it appears the most beautiful of all the cities."

Can any one say that such a change can be wrought by the sword of steel. It was indeed the sword of mercy and compassion which brought even the most inveterate enemies of Islam to the Islamic fold.

Modern International law forbids the removal of clothes or ornaments from captive persons. Islam went a step further and actually provided captives with clothes. In Badr, when the Holy Prophet saw Hazrat Abbas naked, he clothed him with a shirt borrowed from Abdullah bin Salul.[1] On another occasion the Holy Prophet clothed about six thousand captives of Banu Hawazan and restored them to their guardians.[2]

In these days little heed is paid to the feelings of the prisoners of war. But Islam teaches us to respect their feelings to a degree unprecedented and unsurpassed. Islam never tolerated that even in captivity a brother should be separated from his brother, a father from a son or a wife from her husband. On one occasion when Hazrat Ali intended to separate a captive woman from her daughter, the Holy Prophet forebade it.[3] Islam respected religious susceptibilities, of the captives too, and this was the reason why they became enamoured of Islam.

CHAUDHRY ABDUL MAJID, B.A.

1. *Tabqat Ibn Saad*, Vol. II, page 54.
2. *Ibid.* Vol. II, Page 111.
3. *Abu Daud*, Vol. II, page 12.

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g with his work in Bandung the missionary pays frequent visits to Garut and looks after the affairs of that community as well.

August and September in East-Africa

Maulvi Mubarak Ahmad, the missionary incharge, started on August 3 on a carefully planned tour through Shiyanga to Mowannza on Lake Victoria. From Mawannza he proceeded by steamer to Musowa and thence to Kitsumu, where, after a stay of two days he took car for Karicho.

In addition to lectures and talks, literature was distributed in Shiyanga, and placed in the Indian and Ismailiyah libraries in Mowanza. Valuable contacts were made in Karicho, notably with an African Sheikh who listened with interest to the message of Ahmadiyyat. Literature was distributed in Karicho as well.

In Nicaro two lectures were delivered : one in the school conducted by the Salvation Army, and the other in the school maintained by the C. M. S. The first lecture was on the " Tomb of Jesus Christ," and the secoud on his " Second Advent." At the end of the second lecture a long discussion followed through questions from the audience on the Mission of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah of this age; on Trinity; the Sonship and god-head of Jesus; his coming down from the cross alive; and his subsequent travels in search of the " lost sleep " of the House of Israel.

Nairobi was reached on August 16. Nairobi is one of the active centres of the Ahmadiyya Movement in East Africa and the touring missionary checked the various books and records pertaining to the work of the centre. The Finance Minister of Buganda and the Chief of Masaka who happened to be in Nairobi at the time and who from earlier contacts were interested in the Movement, were invited to a dinner and were introduced to members of the community. The *Sirat-al-Nabi* meeting in Nairobi was held on September 1, in the Ahmadiyya mosque; and a public meeting was arranged under the chairmanship of Seth Puran Chand which attracted a very large audience. The proceedings opened with a short speech from the chair to the effect that the Holy Prophet of Arabia was one of those leaders and teachers who turn the thoughts of man to his Maker. The next speaker was Syed Mahmud Ullah Shah, B.A., B.T., who

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spoke on the wars the Holy Prophet had to undertake to establish freedom of thought. He was followed by Pandit Lakshmi Narayan, the famous Indian writer and poet in Africa. He paid glowing tributes to the ultimate aim of the teachings of Islam, namely, the establishment of religious liberty and universal peace.

The *Sirat-al-Nabi* meeting in Tanganika was held under the Chairmanship of Dr. Bajwah. Opponents of the Ahmadiyya Movement here did their worst to raise obstacles in the way and resorted even to "picketing"; but the meeting, by the grace of God, was a great success.

On September 15 Syed Mahmud Ullah Shah broadcast a lecture on the wireless on " The Teaching and Practice of the Holy Prophet about War." Reports of the *Sirat-al-Nabi* meetings appeared in a number of leading newspapers.

The prayer day for Allied victory in the War was held by the Ahmadis of Nairobi on September 8, in connection with which appreciative and full notes appeared in *The Kenya Daily Mail*, *The Mombassa Times* and *The East African Standard*.

Bardwan (Bengal)

The touring cyclist and honoray Ahmadiyya missionary Mohammad Hanif, Qamr, reached Bardwan on September 15. His missionary activity in Bardwan may be gauged from the fact that while distributing literature and conveying Ahmadiyyat's Message to individuals and groups, he travelled about 30 miles to and fro in various parts of the town. Among the places he visited for the purpose were all the shopping centres, the railway station, post office, the district offices, the palace of His Highness the Maharajah of Bardwan, and eight mosques in different quarters.

It is notable that Mr. Qamr earns his own living on the route and himself bears all expenses. During a stay of 21 days in Bardwan he was entertained as a guest by friends for only 5 days, and for the rest of his stay he supported himself by procuring temporary clerical work.

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Lagos (West Africa)

Special *Tabligh* day was held on 14th July when in a well considered programme the Message of Ahmadiyyat was conveyed to 4,948 men and about 2,000 women. Two thousands handbills were distributed in the town. To the notables in the town and to some prominent people in Nigeria it was sent by mail. A well attended public meeting was held on the same day which was addressed by Maulvi F. R. Hakeem, the Head of the Ahmadiyya Mission in West Africa. No opposition was experienced from the non-Ahmadi Muslims but some men from among those who have been rusticated from the Move- ment tried to create trouble, but they had no success. Five persons joined the Movement on that day. Members of the *Ansarullah* go regularly into the villages in the neighbou. hood and this seems to be a good plan for approaching th rural population.

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